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For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Romans VIII. - 13

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Notwithstanding all that is said with so much force ~~and truth~~ concerning the unity and agreement of all truth - from whatever various sources derived; notwithstanding the oft repeated assertion that there can be no conflict between science and religion - and that there ought to be none between scientific and religious men, - it appears to me that there is and will be a conflict so long as men confine their attention exclusively - to either one of the two realms which the mind explores. - He who is both scientific and religious - will be able to harmonize the two classes of ideas - and will feel no warfare between them in his own mind. - He who busies himself with religion only - and knows little or nothing of science - will invariably I think ~~may~~ misjudge and antagonize the scientific spirit; while on the other hand men who devote themselves wholly to science and make no trial of the ways for acquiring spiritual certainties - will be more than likely to scout all religious pretensions. - The sins of the former class - there is little need - ~~in this presence at least~~ to enlarge upon. - Their faults have long lain open to rebuke, and certain others have exceedingly nourished their self righteousness by denouncing them. – The persecutions to which scientific enquirers have been subjected by ecclesiastical authorities and the worse than insane folly of ~~which~~ those upholders of old religious dogmas who will not recognize some of the best established among scientific truths – furnish the seeker for oratorical effects with excellent material. – It is quite easy to heat ones own brain – and to make other minds glow with a sense of their own virtuous superiority – by vigorous denunciation of religious bigotry and fanaticism. – But perhaps there is some little trifle more of this kind of talk now current than the well-balanced mind can relish. – For there is another side to the ~~[illegible]~~ picture. – There are such things as scientific bigotry and fanaticism. – Minds which make no attempt to fathom the meaning of religious ideas – and admit no reality save that which can be subjected to some physical test – such minds often treat religion with just as much intolerance as ecclesiastics ever displayed – and doubtless in a bloody age and with as much power as the Church ~~they~~ once wielded – they would visit upon belief in God and immortality the same cruelties that the pioneers of science had once to endure. – ~~But~~

But neither upon their offenses do I care to dwell, – Let me simply point out that on both sides there are extremists – who will keep alive a fight between what they call religion and science – however true may be the unity and peace between these two in the mind that comprehends them both, – – But not only do individuals thus rush to unwarranted extremes; the public mind itself seldom if ever takes the just and comprehensive middle ground – and though it be not in so marked a fashion – has its pendulum swing – which drives it now to this side – then on that – of that line of gravitation which is also the line of truth. – It was the old theory of disease – upon which phlebotomy was founded – that it was caused through an abnormal tendency of the blood to rush to some particular part of the system in undue quantities; Medical science to day has gone far behind this their supposed first cause; but still as a symptom or result of disease – it is still found true that the blood is imperfectly distributed throughout the system – being somewhere in excess - and at other points correspondingly diminished. - So if we may liken the mind of the race - to that vital fluid which courses through our veins, - it also - for whatever cause - from time to time locates itself too much in certain particular institutions - aims or beliefs. which for the while become congested - so to speak; leaving other equally important objects of thought to languish ill supplied with means of life. - Five hundred years ago for example - the church had gathered ~~a~~ into itself - nearly all sources of strength - and drained the life-blood from all other parts of the body politic. - To day it is the church which suffers most from mental poverty - and science - once despised and neglected - is overburdened with honor and attention. - Now it is the state - now art - now commerce; - here the old establishment, then the new reform - which for the time being becomes the one main channel of mental activity. - Never will you find these various objects in anything like equipoise - always some will have more and others less than their due proportion of balance and ~~[illegible]~~ influence, and seldom will one be able to predict what the next change will be. - Just now as I have said. Science has something of the undue prominence before the public mind - which religion so long held - and ~~to~~ the same mental bias which once made every scientific explanation of events seem wicked and preposterous, - now leads many people to condemn a religious interpretation of life as foolish and absurd. - Once the presumption was that every event expressed the direct and special will of Deity - and natural law was looked upon as a device for destroying piety and breaking down trust in God. - - Now the presumption is that every event is the result of unchangeable natural laws. - All belief in what are called special providences is discountenanced - and God is looked upon - either as an unknown first cause - infinitely removed from contact with our lives, or, simply as the Eternal and unbending Will which supports an unvarying system of universal law. - Neither of these presumptions - more than the other - will bear the test of examination. - Both mark an extreme to which the mind has swung. -- ~~Do~~ -

It should be said that the Modern Mind - is much less fanatical on one side, than the Mediaeval mind was in the other, - The ~~[illegible]~~ swing of the pendulum - grows shorter with each return; and the mind in its vibrations - pauses each time somewhat nearer the central truth. - But still the now prevailing belief in nature and natural law is something of an exaggeration, - The true reading and explanation of life - as I apprehend, - must recognize both the orderly sequence of cause and effect - and the frequent interference with that sequence by an intelligence higher than ~~natural~~ law. - No belief which bases itself upon one of these two factors of existing realities to the exclusion of the other, can be reasonable or satisfactory. -

Certainly the belief that earthquakes and eclipses and pestilent diseases - are directly ordered by the divine will to punish man's moral delinquencies - is a superstition by which the thinking mind can never again be victimized, - - Let us see if there be not something irrational in the opposite belief that all things must be accounted for by the action of immutable laws, and that the Divine will only carries out its purposes through the agency of cause and effect.- - - One argument of which much use has been made in support of this belief- is that we can only ~~think~~ conceive God as an infinite and perfect Being- when we think of Him as acting from fixed principles and through invariable methods.- A God whose plan of the world ~~[illegible]~~ breaks down- and needs to be remedied and supplemented by special arbitrary acts, as set forth in the old story of man's fall- and redemption, is only a finite and imperfect Deity. after all- it is said,- - Very true- though we are not the first to discover this weakness,- John Calvin saw it, and strengthened his system- by the doctrine of predestination.- In his thought- the plan of the world did not break down- but all things transpired exactly as the divine mind had foreseen and decreed.- The God of Calvinism was perfect in wisdom and power,- and if He seemed to be lacking in justice, Calvinism escaped that difficulty by saying that it was not for the finite mind to measure the moral attributes of the Infinite.-

It is indeed a very unsafe method of reasoning – to assume that such and such things are essential parts of divine perfection – and then to infer that thus and so the government of the world is carried on. – That goes far to realize the witty and not altogether untruthful definition of theology, as it has hitherto existed – that it is a science which assumes ~~as~~ for truth – what nobody can know anything about – and then says – "Hence we infer", — – Still it may be granted that the thought of God is inseparable from that of perfection – and that the human mind must always in the end reject any belief which plainly belittles the divine power and wisdom. – – But why should belief in special interpositions of the will of God, interfere with the thought of absolute perfection – and ~~why~~ does not this restriction of the divine – to none but legal methods of action – itself destroy the conception of perfect moral attributes? If God by direct power of will sets aside the results of law – or adds to existing causes a potency which they do not possess in themselves, that does not ~~mean~~ necessarily mean that His purposes were at the beginning half formed - ~~and~~ or that the means adopted by Him are ill chosen; It only means - what our own experience makes us know well ~~not~~ enough - that the finite is an imperfect tool. The imperfection is not in Heaven but upon Earth, - Special providences are made necessary - not by the occurrence of contingencies unforeseen by the infinite mind, but because a growing and incomplete creation cannot by means of its own mechanism wholly remedy its own disasters. - The most perfect machine ever yet devised ~~by~~ needs to be superintended ~~and~~ adjusted and repaired by the labor of the hand. - So it is no impeachment of divine Wisdom - that the laws it has ordained - need sometimes to be modified or assisted - or even for the time abrogated, to secure the result at which the creative power aims. - - - On the other hand, the conception of law when applied to the Divine mind - easily becomes a serious limitation - which makes of God anything but the Infinite and absolute King - which our hearts desire to find him, - - And little is gained by saying that God is everywhere present in the system of laws He has established. - The fact is that law means necessity; And if God is nothing but law; it is nothing but necessity. What matter whether one says that God is above the moving stream directing its flow - or that he is in the current - the force which impels it onward! - In either case if the current must move in one fixed channel - and no other, God is so bound by chains of fate - as to cease to be the God of religious faith. - You need not believe that at the command of Jehovah the rolling world stood still - in order that the lengthened day might afford the Hebrew General opportunity to crush his heathen enemy. That may not seem a proper occasion, - and indeed you may not be able to conceive of any occasion that would justify such ~~an [illegible] of~~ display of arbitrary power. - But unless you believe that God is able to stop ~~to stop~~ the motion of the spheres by his fiat, - should the need arise, your faith in God has in it no real substance or strength. - - I will not qualify that statement in the least, - for I am sure it is the truth. - To say that you cannot see in any given instance the occasion for a miracle - and therefore you do not believe a miracle occurred - is one thing, - But to say that in no instance was the ~~natural~~ order of nature ever interfered with, and that there is no Power competent to work a miracle is quite ~~an~~ another thing; —

You may believe that never has God chosen or needed to interfere with the action of any natural cause further than to add to it some unusual power; — Then it becomes simply a question of interpreting the history of the past — and deciding how much or how little God has seen fit to supplement the results of law. But unless there is behind nature, a Power that holds unlimited and absolute control of natures forces — there is no God to whom prayers should be addressed — or who is any less than ourselves entangled in the web of fate. — —

I do not attempt here to array any proof of the existence of ~~the~~ a personal Deity; ~~[illegible]~~ my present purpose gives me no space for that, I simply say that not only is there no necessity for thinking that God acts always through invariable laws; — but so thinking we make him an imperfect rather than a perfect Being. — There is no necessity for this belief. — Even if there be a great first cause from whom all things proceed - that cause has at every instant the originating power which it first possessed - -

The befogged mind says - ~~[illegible]~~ for every effect there must be a cause, - That cause was an effect behind which was another cause, - and so on backward ~~to~~ to all infinity, ~~till you come to the [illegible]~~ Why so? - If we understand this line of causation ~~you~~ we must put God at its beginning - why must ~~you~~ we stretch it out to infinite length? Why not suppose of any given series of causes - that - in the absence of proof to the contrary - at some definite number of removes backward - it brings us to that same original creative energy - which we put at the end ~~of our~~ infinite perspective? - Again - to shut God up to the laws of the world - to say that outside those laws is no power to alter or amend or supplement their action; - that beyond the machine is no eye of superintendence - and that all the divinity there is - is contained within the great system of Nature's ~~laws~~ causes and forces; - is to take from God all the attributes that are the base of religious life and trust; - - One might as well cry for help to the tremendous [illegible]

and reason which brings his mind to [illegible]
not whither - as if a God who is simply the sum
of all law abiding forces, -- If the mind of
man is to know us - let us be told - together
of all being is the supernatural - we must accept
our fate, - But let us at all events understand
that when we give up the idea of a God that the
effect
is above and beyond what we call nature, ~~there~~
is left to us
~~[illegible]~~ is practically - nothing but materialism
and atheism, and the kingdom of reason will [illegible]
to chaos our hosts with a semblance of the
reality they have lost, - -

There is however too much [illegible] faith
in perfect for the present - The faith of intellect
progresses more [illegible] through reason - and always
welcome [illegible]. This belief in law and natural
evolution in the whole kingdom of things - is the
natural form that modern belief - which forms
a supernatural meaning in even the most
trifling ordinary occurrences, - Seldom indeed
does the mind pause at the first event which
it perceives - but almost always assumes the
cause, ~~[illegible]~~ till an infinite chaining - and to

is found a little in advance of [illegible], — The like has happened in this matter. The working ground of established natural science, the human spirit has gone [illegible] from, and become the [illegible] of freedom religious obligation; — but it was the spirit [illegible] commanded we must have no anxiety as to the result. The [illegible] [illegible] not being beyond the form of [illegible] and the [illegible] of man cannot reach the heart of this conformity [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] nothing, — In one of the [illegible] that the world of our Lord (?) from many marks of [illegible] [illegible] which obtained the [illegible] of Christianity, — That [illegible] this was an age of larger intellectual curiosity, — There were old forms of religious faith had become [illegible] and [illegible], As the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and human intellect had thrown off religious superstitions — ~~in the [illegible] [illegible]~~ and accepted in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] — so the modern intellect has ~~[illegible]~~ freed itself from the [illegible] and childish beliefs of the mediaeval Church — and has put its trust in natural law, —

I [illegible] take for myself [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] affirm as to predict that the outcome of that age will be the renewal of stronger than passing [illegible], by a determination in that truth of religion.-

May we not suppose that such a renewal of spiritual Christianity as we have reason to hope for through the decay of priestly superstitions, will be the answer to that long cherished promise of a second coming of Christ?- I for one am strongly disposed to believe that as the Messianic dream of the Hebrew Race had its [illegible] fulfilment - though in a much nobler and grander way than the prophets of the nation had foreseen;- So under cover of belief in a second advent of Christ - has been nursed an expectation of a new unfolding of the power of the Christian Religion - destined to be very eminent.-- But whatever name and form it may bear - I am sure that religious faith in God will not die -- and will in the future be much stronger and clearer in the general mind than ever it has been before. —

Meanwhile - though the world is safe - we as individuals - who have in keeping the peace of our own - and other minds that are dear to us, - But personally I say is this point there are surrounded by much peril, - On the one side there is no promise of rest for us in religious communion when accord doctrines are repugnant to our reason - and when faith is held only in a lifeless and half-hearted way, - On the other hand - as I have tried to point out, when we give up belief in God as a surrounding intelligence - greater than law and physical force - and strive to worship and trust the Power only that is in Nature. Nature is too strong for us, - We break down in the attempt - outfaced by the pains and cruelties - of which nature is so full, - Belief in natural things - is always a wholesome check upon the mind - which unaided is too apt to fall into a ~~[illegible]~~ foolish mysticism, - But at the same time - worship of what we can see of natural order, - or of a power limited wholly to natural means for expressing divine justice and Love, is all too poor and unmeaning a worship - long to engage the heart, - For a time the mind may hold and waver between two logical positions,— like a magnet suspended between opposing attractions.— But sooner or later it is seen to make its choice one way or the other — and fit its practice to its thought. In this case — I wish to say most solemnly and earnestly — the mind has only the alternative between faith in God — as one who hears our prayers — and who can at least — when he sees fit — bring to our aid a power not in the laws by which our lives are ordinarily governed. Our only alternative lies I say between this and no faith at all that has practical value as a help and guide.—

I think it worth while to suggest to those who find difficulty in making the thought of God real to their minds, or who feel instinctively that much in [illegible] [illegible], Science [illegible] is leading their grasp- that they should [illegible] whether the most of their [illegible] [illegible], not [illegible] in this [illegible] estimate of the Nature and power of God,— What is the idea a [illegible] of ~~power~~ nature? Surely that warrants an [illegible] that is [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] of infinite [illegible]!— Why may we not believe — what the world's history and our own experience confirms — that God employs also special modes of action - more nicely adapted to the individual case than any general one can be; He considers that they who seek to find their Deity in the natural mechanism of existence - quiet and unsatisfied so that is [illegible] finds nothing which answers their end. The soul desires to find ~~[illegible]~~ in God a refuge from this mechanism - where it becomes ~~[illegible]~~ [illegible]

A power ~~which~~ whose mercy and justice exceed those of the blind forces which only [illegible] carry out the behests of infinite holiness - and only with such a Heavenly Father can the soul be satisfied.—

I have consumed much more time than I had purposed - in reaching the more immediately practical aspect of this topic; - i.e. its bearing upon ~~the~~ Morals ~~[illegible]~~ and every day conduct. -- This over-belief in natural laws and forces - leads almost as a matter of course to views of human nature which do not bear close examination - and which are not likely to have ~~the~~ an entirely beneficial influence upon character. - Doubtless anything is better than that depressing conception of a totally corrupt and depraved humanity - pursued by the Curse of God, and utterly unable to

win back the divine regard "it" ~~had~~ has forfeited;-- And
yet something is risked too by adopting the opposite
conclusion that all man's instincts are divine - and that
he has nothing to do but obey the promptings of
his own heart;-- If intellectual theories were
always consistently and logically applied, I know
not that calling man naturally the child of God would
be any better than calling him the child of Satan.
while in both cases no wise discrimination should be
made between the good and the bad - the high and the
low - in his disposition, - It is a curious instance
of the inconsistency of minds which adopt these
sweeping theoretical assertions - that the Church which
has so long preached the entire sinfulness of the
human heart - finds itself driven - in order to establish
the credibility of its early historical records - to
maintain the general truth and soundness of man;
while the opposite school of thought - which has
long denounced the doctrine of human depravity
and declared that falsehood and imposture had
no native place in the mind is often ~~of man~~ - ~~is~~ content
to treat the history of the Christian Church as one
long exhibition of folly and vice - such as none but

a depraved mind — could devise or encourage. —"

Were it not that men thus practically deny the extravagancies of their creeds we might well be alarmed at the growth of beliefs which leave out of sight ~~the~~ many of the highest obligations that rest upon us as spiritual beings. — Even as it is — should we not apprehend some danger to the world's morals — when men are led to think that such a passion as that of revenge — being one ~~which~~ of the natural impulses of human nature — is entitled to gratification; — and that since all 'instincts' are God given — no harm can come from their indulgence?

How can we expect our children to attempt any work of moral self discipline when they are taught that the idea of a traitor in their hearts — an evil force which needs to be thwarted and guarded against, is entirely a Church myth — and that there is nothing in their natures save what is perfectly wholesome and sound? — — It is true that in the government of the young mind — we needs must have a large faith in native ability to [illegible] and conquer evil, and often we have done our utmost to direct it in the right path — that [illegible] is not little compared with the mind's own persistance in following out its natural bent; — But while so many a young life is wrecked and wasted before it has fairly entered upon manhood and womanhood, can we afford to have our slightest efforts for their good interfered with by a belief that shuts their eyes to the need of self-discipline - and breaks down habits of self-command? — Believe what you will of the inherent goodness or badness of human nature, - there stands the awful fact that when the first strain of evil comes upon them, a very large number of our young minds: - wholly or partially break down; - and if not unmade are marred for life by their first encounter with temptation; - - While our young men have so sharp and trying an ordeal to pass through, to prove themselves worthy the world's trust and confidence; while no one can hope to drift successfully through that dangerous channel which lies between youth and manhood, and perhaps never will stand in more need of a steadfast heart and a commanding will - than that any voyage demands: — we cannot see with indifference that their minds are becoming confused as to what among their own impulses they are to trust and what disparage, —— The "natural man" to-day is acquiring his rights with a vengeance,— If he has been unjustly despised and oppressed ~~by~~ under the rule of this doctrine of "total depravity", with the help of modern ideas of a Divinity in natural things— he is likely to arrogate to himself something more than his just due of dignity and importance.— The best interests of society are not wholly safe when the old distinction between natural and spiritual breaks down,— and no part of human nature is seen to be more divine than another, —— though anger, revenge and selfish pride are passions which the Creator has given to man, yet it is equally true that all the plants of the field are God's making, and no one thinks of using poisonous vegetation for food— simply because God made it,— The truth is— not only that in our mental constitution— as in our physical frames there are certain relics of the animal life behind us, for which we have no use,— but more than this, that the ~~higher~~ lower faculties of our being— have never any right to make their health and happiness a first consideration.

We go somewhat too far in figuring to ourselves the physical life - as the basis of a pyramid which can have no apex - unless this base be whole and sound. -- We assume too much when we suppose that ~~bodily appetites must be fed the~~ feeding of bodily appetites nourishes the soul. - The body is the souls instrument; and it is important that the strong soul should possess as perfect a tool as may be. - But it is of much greater importance that the soul itself should be intelligent and brave, be its physical basis ample or small. - Surely for all noble purposes - a strong mind in a weak body - is better than a strong body controlled by a weak mind. - - - Simple as this truth may sound - it is I think too much overlooked among us. - For the comfort and welfare of physical life - myriads of hands are working - and numberless brains are scheming. - With all the ardor men have ever displayed in seeking salvation for their souls - are we now engaged in establishing the conditions of bodily comfort and health. - Nor would I for one have this ardor abated by a single jot. - Only & earnest I have men remember that when they have perfectly secured physical ~~[illegible]~~ well being - they have not thereby made sure spiritual strength and exaltation, - but for that must make an independent struggle, - I would have them give heed to certain hints - which speak of some degree of conflict between physical and spiritual interests, and indicate the possibility of mental growth in the midst of very imperfect physical conditions. - The Mohammedans hold partial insanity to be one of the accompanyments of a prophetic gift - ~~holding~~ believing that only when the eye of outward reason is partly closed - can the inward reason have clear sight; - - But be that as it may - are we not told that it is a disease in the oyster which secretes ~~[illegible]~~ for us the precious pearl? - and is it not said that when there is insanity in a family - some of its members are often born with an exceptional genius? - We do not know enough of these matters to dogmatize about them - but it is plain that we get some things of great worth out of what we should call abnormal conditions, - and any single instance of such mental good out of physical ill - is enough to mark the broad distinction between the two realms. -

I would not be misunderstood - and I say again that there is no occasion to find fault with the world for the attention it lavishes upon physical life.- No one desires to set up again a puritanic regime,- or ~~inaugurate~~ inaugurate a crusade against earthly comforts and enjoyments.- But let it be understood that this is humanity's weak side - and that in the absence of spiritual checks and guards - men have ever needed only the slightest pretext to give the rein to their physical passions.-

Let it be further understood - that though from the old pagan standpoint - virtue consisted in balance and moderation of natural appetites and desires.- yet from the higher Christian standpoint - a new reading of virtue is made imperative.- The pagan lived for this world only.- The Christian sees in this life chiefly a discipline for a higher life that is to succeed, and he stands ready to cast away some portion of his happiness on earth - for the sake of happiness in heaven.- No man who lives for this world only can afford to do without his right hand, however much it may offend;- but - speaking figuratively - the Christian ~~casts~~ cuts off even his right hand and casts it from him, rather than peril the welfare of his soul - in the world to come.-

Here arises a much more heroic than the ancient type of virtue, - Here begins something more than moderate indulgence - even stern self-denial - for the sake of an ideal purity. -- The Christian sees that while as an animal he is born to die - as a spirit he is born to live. -- He sees that all the treasure he puts into things that perish must be wasted at their death - and that only spiritual wealth has value in itself. - All this is set forth over and over again - with great clearness and force in the Epistles of St. Paul. - It is the doctrine by help of which Christian peoples have won the *virtues* they possess - and we may safely affirm - it is essential as a means of *sustaining* these virtues. -

As a spiritual being man must "mortify the deeds of the body." - He must not only keep his desires from that excess which consumes them in their own fire; - but must make them bow to an ideal good beyond themselves - and if need be must crush them out of his heart - rather than they shall cloud the spiritual beauty of the soul. - I have spoken of revenge. - Nothing is sweeter to the savage or half savage - sometimes

Even to the civilized man himself than to see his enemy prostrate before him - suffering for the wrongs he has inflicted, - Every vestige of that passion - Christ's precepts bid us tear from our hearts - and we are taught to deny ourselves every particle of gratification so derived, - And why? - Because it is wholly foreign to our thought of the divine nature, - and it is the image of God after which we are to ~~patt~~ pattern our mortal lives, -

But why multiply words! - The simple truth to which we must come back from all the exaggerations into which we run - is that Nature does not anywhere contain the whole of God, - and is indeed only the imperfect outward thing which ~~His~~ Spirit is shaping into better form, -- Be it our separate hearts - the ~~planet~~ planet on which we live - or the universe of worlds by which we are surrounded, - equally the creative will is yet busy - molding them to a better expression of the divine thought, -- Outwardly our trust should be not alone in the created law - but ~~far~~ more in the ever present Power which creates, - Inwardly we should place our dependence and hope - not in ~~the~~ our native impulses and desires alone; - but above all in that spark of divine power that is given us - to reduce to heavenly order the kingdom of the human soul, - to purge out of it all evil - and fit it for its inheritance of everlasting life, — —